

## **Meeting Minutes – Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC)**

Wednesday, August 19, 2015

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Eiteljorg Museum

500 West Washington Street

Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

### **Voting Members Present**

Shannon Turner, Peter Magnant, Erin Oliver, Kenneth Eagle, Tracy Locke, John P. Warren, Cameron F. Clark, John Boyd and Nathan Underwood.

### **Voting Members Not Present**

Dave Liebel, Sarah Ancel, Joe Moser, Greg Bedan

### **Non-Voting Members Present**

Senator Randy Head

### **Non-voting Members Not Present**

Representative Dan Leonard

### **Staff Present**

Kerry Steiner, Executive Director

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 pm by John P. Warren, Chair for the Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC). Executive Director Steiner performed a roll call which resulted in nine voting members and one non-voting member being present at the start of the meeting. As a result, the meeting established a quorum.

### **Invocation**

By the request of Chairman Warren, Commissioner Turner provided the invocation.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Pete Magnant made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Commissioner Shannon-Marie Turner seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor of approving the agenda.

### **Review Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes for the May 20, 2015, commission meeting were reviewed by the commissioners. Commissioner Magnant asked for clarification of the public comment regarding the sainthood of Junipero Serra. He specifically requested that the minutes include Serra's name.

No additional amendments were presented. Commissioner Cameron Clark made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tracey Locke. All commissioners were in favor of approving the meeting minutes.

### **Logo/Website Updates**

Executive Director Steiner presented a logo that is currently being used to represent the commission. This logo was designed using artwork from the current Indiana Native American license plate. She reported that she was considering a future contest to redesign the current plate.

Executive Director Steiner reported that the website is being updated regularly. She shared that she was currently working on a feedback form to be added to the website. Additionally, a new email address was being generated for the public. Use of this email address for general inquiries, rather than her individual address, would allow the commission to maintain a continuity of communication if she would ever leave the Executive Director position.

### **License Plate**

Executive Director Steiner reported that she had submitted the license plate renewal packet, but had not heard any news. She stated that the once approved renewal would be good for 10 years. Commissioner Erin Oliver asked if we possessed the ability to redesign during the 10 year period. Executive Director Steiner confirmed, a redesign would be allowed twice a year, with deadlines on or before January 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> of any calendar year.

Commissioner Kenneth Eagle suggested a school contest to provide outreach and promote native issues within schools. He suggested that the commission identify one or two counties every couple of years to redesign. He believed that this would also provide recognition to the selected school system.

Chairman Warren raised concerns that picking specific counties could leave people out of the process. He believed there would be more effective ways to organize a contest. Specifically he suggested Facebook “likes” and asking for school participation. He believed it would be a big task to tackle. Chairman Warren did support a redesign and stated that the marketing of the current plate had become stale. He also reported that the prior plate had been designed by a contest. Commissioner Clark shared concerns about a non-native artist designing artwork that could be offensive.

Executive Director Steiner reported concerns that the design would need to be done by an employee of the State of Indiana if possible. Commissioner Clark reported that there are options for outside approval. Antoinette Holt, substitute Commissioner Designee from the Department of Health, reiterated that she believed that the commission would be outside of these rules because of its status as a commission. Christine Meyer, deputy director for the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, confirmed that the artist did not have to be a state employee, but would need to be approved as a vendor.

It was determined that the commission members have the ability to design their own logo. The commission decided that Native American members of the commission would design or locate designs they believed would be appropriate and submit them electronically to start the redesign conversation.

### **Military Stand-Down Events**

Executive Director Steiner reported that the commission’s participation in the Military Stand Down event had come in under the projected budget. The funds purchased reusable water bottles, socks, and bungee cords to provide to the expected 1000 participants. The first of eight events is scheduled for September 15, 2015. Chairman Warren requested that Executive Director Steiner post the dates and location of the events on the Commission’s website. He also reiterated his support for the event and encouraged others to volunteer for the program.

### **Heritage Month Event**

Executive Director Steiner reported that the November event was scheduled for November 13, 2015 at the Indiana State Museum, and the agenda is fairly concrete. She reported that they are expecting as many as 1000 school age children. Plans include a traditional long house presentation, table displays, and games. There will also be a presentation honoring LeRoy Malaterre for his long standing support of the state's Native American community.

Commissioner Turner shared that the focus would be on tribes of Indiana with the majority of the students attending being from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. It was also reported that the festivities would include participation from the Eiteljorg Museum. A save the date blast will be released in the near future.

Executive Director Steiner reported that the budget for event is still being finalized; however, she did not expect to be requesting more than \$10,000 for the entire event.

### **Interns**

Executive Director Steiner reported that the internship program was a great idea, but she will execute differently next time. Some of the research projects were completed, but others had not followed through.

### **Native American Mascots**

Executive Director Steiner reported that the Indiana American Indian Movement (AIM) community has been doing some work in the area of native mascots; however, she clarified that the commission is not engaged with AIM in any manner.

Goshen High School recently decided to retire the r-word mascot and brought forth a request for INAIAC to assist with the monetary needs required to make the change. Specifically they were requesting \$16,110 to facilitate the changes.

Commissioner Eagle stated that he does not believe people see the mascot issue as racist. He stated that he lives in a community that has a native mascot and that forcing a removal of the mascot would be punishing people who do not know what they are being punished for. Chairman Warren disagreed with Commissioner Eagle and reminded the commission members and audience about the historical connotations of the words.

Commissioner Magnant reported that he has spoken and listened to community member's stance on the mascot issue, and he sees the lack of a middle ground. He is concerned that completely eliminating the existence of the Native American mascot would be literary genocide. He shared that he is concerned for the disappearance of Native Americans in education. He stated that he is not offended by the use and reminded the commission that many of these were established from a place of honor. Chairman Warren disagreed with Commissioner Magnant and stated that the r-word is derogatory, and he believes that the commission's role isn't to force change, but rather to educate the state on the history and impact of the use of the r-word. Chairman Warren referenced studies that show the use of mascots is detrimental to tribal youth. Commissioner Magnant asked the chairman to share the studies if possible.

There was no motion for support of Goshen High School's request.

### **Indiana Bicentennial**

Executive Director Steiner reported that the state's bicentennial committee asked for input on a symbol that would appropriately represent the state's American Indian history. With advice from the commission, the state decided to include an image of two feathers to the bicentennial metal. The executive director also shared that ICRC will be participating in the bicentennial celebration.

### **Budget**

Executive Director Steiner reported that she is not able to provide account balances for July due to the departure of the Civil Rights Chief Financial Officer. She reported that \$51,499.09 had reverted back to the state at the end of the fiscal year. Balances should be available by the next meeting.

### **Strategic Plan (2016-2019)**

The commission has been asked to identify three items to be included in the upcoming strategic plan. The area priority areas identified included: 1) Annual Education Conference for Teachers, 2) Tutorial DVDs for Educators/IDOC, and, 3) Webinars/Podcasts on programs, services and cultural information. These items will be submitted to ICRC for inclusion in the 2016-2019 strategic plan.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Employment**

Commissioner and subcommittee chairman Cameron Clark reported that they had connected with a representative from Honda to discuss ways that the commission can partner with industry to assist in the area of American Indian employment and workforce training. Connections have been made with the USDA, federal employment and will be made with Cummins and Lilly. A joint meeting with the employment and education subcommittees is also being planned for the purpose of addressing related and overlapping subject areas.

#### **Education**

The education subcommittee reported that they are currently working on a school curriculum which would provide links to all federally recognized tribal websites. A major focus of the committee is to create resources for teachers to utilize in the classroom. The committee is also consulting on the bi-literacy seal requirements related to American Indian languages. The committee also presented for approval, the creation of a scholarship program that would award \$15,000/year to Native undergraduate students. There was discussion of creating an endowment to help support the future of the scholarship. Chairman Warren raised cash flow concerns, and Commissioner Clark questioned if the creation of an endowment would be permissible with Commission funds. Ms. Meyer was consulted and stated she would look into the issue. Executive Director Steiner stated that she believed it was permissible.

Chairman Warren requested that the committee present a packet laying out all details of the proposed program for the commission to review prior to the next meeting.

#### **Civil Rights**

The Civil Rights subcommittee is discussing the development of an approval process for those who are providing ceremonial guidance within the Department of Corrections (DOC). The subcommittee is benchmarking and looking for best practices. It was also reported that the DOC planned to host a Battle

of Little Big Horn celebration in which commission members would be participating. It was also reported that the development of DVDs and other materials for use by incarcerated individuals was a priority for the subcommittee. Finally, they reported that the issue of tobacco and smudging continues to be raised as an issue. The subcommittee is recommending the use of a feather rather than smudging in situations where the use of smoke would not be appropriate.

### **Health**

The subcommittee reported that they were collaborating with the American Indian Center of Indiana (AICI) to address issues of diabetes and to provide health screenings.

Antoinette Holt, State Program Director for Minority Health provided the commission with challenges in obtaining Native American health data. She reported that data is often statistically unsound because it is excluding individuals who identify as multi-racial. She reported that they are working on new ways for people to report. Improving data collection is a priority.

### **Housing**

The subcommittee shared information regarding Section 184. The subcommittee identified the distribution of this information to the general public as a priority.

### **VA Affairs Presentation**

Matt Vincent, Program Director from the Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs, shared resources and programs that their office offers to Indiana veterans. Mr. Vincent highlighted programs such as the property tax deduction, the Military Veteran Relief Fund, TANF, and HUD-VASH. He reported that his office is hosting a number of outreach events. Detailed information regarding these events are located on the Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs website at [www.in.gov/dva](http://www.in.gov/dva).

### **Public Comment**

Shirley Willard from the Fulton County Historical Society, Rochester, Indiana provided information on books that included American Indian history of Indiana. She also stated the need for the state Bicentennial Committee to include the history of Native American people in Indiana in the scheduled programming.

Dr. Eric Banta offered to assist with the filming of educational DVDs. He was encouraged to connect with Executive Director Steiner regarding his willingness to assist with the efforts.

Richard Turner presented a business opportunity involving the Teepee Restaurant which was once located in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Commissioner Clark reported that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is continuing to work on the issue that was raised in the spring. He reported that a draft has been put together, but they are specifically looking for a list of what specific plants and what quantities are needed. He asked the Mr. Jeremy Turner, who originally raised the issue, assist in providing the DNR this information.

Executive Director Steiner thanked the public for their continued presence. She shared that this commission has the largest public attendance of all commissions.

**Adjournment:**

As there was no other business to come before the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. by a motion introduced by Commissioner Clark and seconded by Commissioner Turner.